

The Stamps of Great Britain

The 1d. Large Crown Perf. 14 'Blued and White Papers

By Capt. F. C. HOLLAND

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1. Introduction.

Many collectors must have read through page 6 of Stanley Gibbons' Part I Catalogue and then turned elsewhere for a group of stamps in which to specialise. Yet on that page is mentioned a stamp that is ideal for the collector whose expenditure has to be limited—the 1d. Large Crown 14. The catalogue gives no clear indication of the marvellous range of wonderful shades in which it can be found. Some of these shades are common, some scarce and some rare, and there is always a chance for the collector with a good eye for colour to benefit handsomely from a careful look at dealers' stock books. The stamp was printed on blued paper, on yellowed paper, and on white paper. The blued paper prints have Alphabet II or III check letters; the yellowish paper prints have Alphabet III, and the white paper prints can be found with Alphabets II, III and IV. Most of the varieties that occur on the 1d. Black and 1d. Red Imperf. exist also on the 1d. L.C. 14—re-entries, double letters, extended frame lines, "ivory heads," constant marks, etc. If fine, well-chosen copies only are taken the collector can have a large number of pages in his or her album which are a joy for any true philatelist to see.

In studying material suitable for this series of articles, I have received great help from Mr. G. Owen Wheeler, who most kindly regrouped his stamps, so that the wide range of shades could be more easily seen and comparisons made more quickly. This task necessitated many hours of careful work, for which I am most grateful to him. Many collectors have seemed to us to possess very vague ideas of the "Transitional Shades" of the 1d. L.C. 14 stamps, probably because there is, as far as we know, no clear detailed account of these shades and their origin. As it is impossible to make a specialised collection of the 1d. L.C. 14 without understanding the true history of the Transitional Period, it has seemed to both of us wise to show first something of the aims and achievements of the printers during the last months of 1856 and the first half of 1857. The reasons for the new shades of 1857, the yellowed paper prints, the white paper prints, and the new standard shade of July 1857 will then be apparent, and it will be clear that these changes were not unconnected events, but chapters linked together in the history of the production of our 1d. postage stamps. During the currency of the shades of the

1d. L.C. 14 of 1856 on blued paper with Alphabet III check letters, the Postal Authorities were confronted with two problems. The first, and the more urgent of these, was the elimination of the blueing which for so long had discoloured emissions. The second need was that of arriving at an approved and standard colour for the 1d. "red".

In the Autumn of 1856, some 1d. red-browns were produced on white paper—whether fortuitously or not we shall probably never know, for subsequent printings are commonly met which show blueing. But experiments definitely followed, probably at the close of 1856, and these are of major importance. We find specimens, especially of the "brown-rose" stamp, showing small blotches of yellow in the blue field on the backs of the stamps. These blotches steadily increased in size at the expense of blueing until they drove it out entirely on the field of the actual stamp—blue tingeing showing only on the margin of paper immediately framing each stamp. Finally "yellowing" entirely took the place of blueing in some cases. This yellow discolouration may be found permeating the whole stamp, e.g., one "brown-rose" sent by inland mail reached Haverfordwest on November 5th, 1856. The yellow influence is apparent on the face of it, while the back is heavily yellowed all over, save for an indistinct "blue head."

Yellowing was a discolouration and called for eradication. It was short-lived, for a cure was soon found for it, though a few "throw-backs" exist. Some shades, such as the "plums" and trial colourings, were never issued on yellowed paper. The first orange shades may show a blotch or streak of yellow on the back, but were seldom, if ever, uttered in full yellowing.

Concurrently with the galaxy of new hues found between February and May 1857, the authorities were experimenting on new lines with a pale rose stamp of an anaemic depth which appeared in March. A few of these were issued on blued paper and we find an occasional specimen lightly tinged with yellowing.

One relatively strong rose pink stamp shows both blue and yellow influence. In late April 1857 there appeared some rose stamps with yellowing visible, especially on the margins between the stamps. They were probably "throw-backs" and are not very scarce. The pale rose came to show considerable brown influence, but steadily deepened towards the standard rose-red eventually favoured.

One remarkable feature of the end of the Transitional Period was the appearance of many brilliant examples of new colours on blued or on white paper. Edinburgh and Glasgow had many of these and at the time when "double" and "duplex" postmarks in blue or green accentuate this brilliancy. These may have been at the bottom of a magazine store for ages and under superimposed relays of fresh consignments of stamps printed much later. They came into use until the autumn of 1857 by which time the pale rose had deepened towards the approved rose-red.

I hope this explanation will enable less advanced collectors to understand the transition of the 1d. L.C. 14 from its early shades on blued paper to its standard rose-red colour on white paper. In Section II of this article I aim at illustrating the explanation above in regard to the orange-brown shades.

2. The Orange-Brown Shades of the 1d. L.C. Perf. 14, Alphabet III.

The orange-brown shades of the 1d. Large Crown Perf. 14, Alphabet III, are a group of lovely stamps that merit more attention than they have been given by G.B. Specialists. Part I of Stanley Gibbons' Catalogue mentions the orange-brown shade as G.B. No. 33 and gives the date of March 1857. Although some specimens bear March 1857 dates, the printers' colour experiments had reached this shade some time previous to this. These were certainly in use in February and it is possible even earlier still.

The shades I have seen with February dates vary and to illustrate the diffusion of the stamps among the offices of the British Isles, details are given in brackets of a typical example of each variety. Some of these early stamps are in a rather pale orange-brown shade with intense blueing of the paper (Bristol, 20th February; London, 21st February). At the same time full and even deep orange-brown varieties were also in use (Liverpool, 16th February; Nottingham, 23rd February; Bristol, 26th February). In these stamps, and in the stamps mentioned later, allowance must be made for the varying degree of blueing of the paper when an attempt is made to compare the shades of the stamps, as this is apt to influence the impression one gets of the colour of the stamps.

The orange-brown shades of the 1d. L.C. 14 on blue paper can be found on covers and pieces dated into the second half of 1857, and from March onwards there are other shades besides those so far known for February. There is a very deep rich orange-brown on well blued paper (Bradford, Yorks, 11th March) and somewhat similar stamps in which a red element is present (London, 10th March). This red element is sometimes very small and sometimes rather more prominent. Examples of the latter can be found on very blue paper.

The orange-brown stamps exist also with the brown element more prominent (Kilkenny 22nd March). There is, in addition, a soft, rather pale, orange-brown without the pronounced brown element (Bristol, 5th April).

On some stamps the blueing of the paper is not so prominent. Among these can be distinguished :—

- (1) A bright orange-brown (Cork, 4th April).
- (2) A very bright orange-brown, sometimes with a distinct brown element.
- (3) A very rich orange-brown.
- (4) A deep, rich orange-brown with very slight blueing.
- (5) A dark orange-brown.

